UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/638
13 July 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 6 JULY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On behalf of Chief Tom Ikimi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria and Chairman of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the communiqué issued at the end of the meeting on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, which was held in Abidjan on 3 July 1998.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ibrahim A. GAMBARI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

98-20402 (E) 150798 150798

/...

Annex

[Original: French]

Communiqué on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, issued in Abidjan on 3 July 1998 by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence of the Economic Community of West African States

1. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) met in Abidjan on 3 July 1998 to consider the current situation in Guinea-Bissau.

2. They recalled that, at dawn on 7 June 1998, a rebellion was begun by certain elements of the armed forces of Guinea-Bissau led by the former Chief of Staff, General Ansoumane Mane.

3. Following the violent clashes that took place between loyalist and rebel forces, President João Bernardo Vieira requested the current Chairman of ECOWAS to expand the spheres of activities and broaden the mandate of the ECOWAS Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) to include Guinea-Bissau.

4. On receiving this request, the current Chairman of ECOWAS, His Excellency General Abdulsalami Abubakar, consulted with his peers and dispatched a fact-finding mission, headed by the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, Mr. Lansana Kouyate, to the Gambia, Guinea and Senegal. The Chairman of the Conference subsequently decided to convene a meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the present meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence.

5. The following member States were represented: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Cape Verde and Mauritania were absent.

6. Representatives of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), as well as representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and of the World Food Programme also participated in the meeting as guests. The Commander of the ECOMOG forces also took part in the meeting.

7. The Ministers reviewed the situation in Guinea-Bissau in the light of the accounts given by the Ministers of Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Senegal and the Gambia and the Commander of the ECOMOG forces. They also considered the final report of the 18th meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, held in Abidjan on 30 June and 1 July 1998.

8. The Ministers resolutely condemned the rebellion in Guinea-Bissau and warned the rebels not to commit any acts of atrocity against the civilian population and foreign nationals.

9. They appealed for an immediate cessation of hostilities throughout the country.

10. They reaffirmed their support for the democratically elected Government of President João Bernardo Vieira.

11. They agreed that the main objective of ECOWAS in Guinea-Bissau was to restore peace and the authority of President Vieira s democratically elected Government throughout the country.

12. The Ministers agreed to work towards the achievement of that objective through a combination of three measures, namely:

(i) Dialogue and negotiations;

(ii) Imposition of sanctions and an embargo;

(iii) The use of force.

13. They recommended that the sphere of activities and mandate of ECOMOG should be broadened to include Guinea-Bissau. In this regard, all States members should supply additional troops to ECOMOG without delay. The Ministers also appealed to member States to provide ECOMOG with the necessary logistical support.

14. In order to ensure that these decisions and recommendations were implemented, the Ministers established a Committee of Seven, composed of Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Senegal, as well as representatives of the OAU and ECOWAS secretariats.

15. They instructed the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Committee of Seven on Guinea-Bissau to inform the current Chairman of ECOWAS of the results of their work.

16. The Ministers expressed their support for Guinea and Senegal s rapid intervention in Guinea-Bissau.

17. They expressed concern over the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Guinea-Bissau and invited humanitarian agencies and all relevant institutions to ensure that the civilian population was not forced to seek refuge in neighbouring countries because of famine and epidemics. They invited all agencies wishing to provide humanitarian assistance to Guinea-Bissau to contact the authorities of Guinea-Bissau and neighbouring countries in order to facilitate the dispatch of such assistance by land or by sea.

18. The Committee of Seven on Guinea-Bissau was instructed to seek the support of the United Nations Security Council for ECOWAS initiatives in Guinea-Bissau.

19. The Ministers also appealed to the international community to support the efforts of ECOWAS to restore peace and the rule of law in Guinea-Bissau.

20. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence expressed their profound gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Henri Konan Bedie, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, and to the Government and people of Côte d'Ivoire for their generous hospitality and the excellent facilities that were provided with a view to ensuring the success of their deliberations.